



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

Isiah Leggett  
County Executive

December 3, 2007

Honorable Martin O'Malley, Governor  
Office of the Governor  
State House, 100 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Governor O'Malley:

On behalf of the people of Montgomery County, I am writing to express my concerns about the Draft *State of Maryland BRAC Action Plan* presented by the BRAC Subcabinet on November 16, 2007, as it relates to the BRAC action at the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) in Bethesda.

I am fully aware that the Subcabinet's Action Plan was drafted prior to the recently concluded Special Session in Annapolis and therefore lacked an assured funding stream to implement any new proposals relating to the several BRAC actions throughout our State. I am also aware that the Subcabinet regards the Draft BRAC Action Plan as just a beginning and will provide more details in the future.

Having said that, however, I must judge the Draft Plan by its contents and share with you the two basic concerns expressed to me by Montgomery County's BRAC Implementation Committee (BIC), an advisory task force comprised of community representatives and local government officials, that 1) the State of Maryland does not fully appreciate the unique nature of the BRAC action establishing the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) in Bethesda, and 2) the Draft BRAC Action Plan does not identify specific and concrete mitigations for anticipated major traffic congestion that will have significant ramifications for accessibility to NNMC/WRNMMC, the National Institutes of Health, and Suburban Hospital (the region's designated trauma center), and on the quality life of surrounding well-established neighborhoods.

While the Draft BRAC Action Plan, in effect, treats all Maryland BRAC actions with the same approach, the BRAC action at NNMC is very different from the other Maryland BRAC actions. Solutions applied statewide by this plan simply do not apply in Bethesda's case. The BRAC action in Bethesda is the only "urban BRAC" in Maryland. While most BRAC actions are moving military facilities to more secure bases away from population centers, this BRAC action will bring approximately 2,500 additional personnel and almost double the number of visits per year – to approximately one million, most by car – to a campus located inside the Capital Beltway and surrounded by well-established neighborhoods and a bustling commercial

downtown. Existing traffic congestion on State roads will be made worse if proper planning and implementation by the State are not forthcoming. In addition, this BRAC action is slated for an area adjacent to the National Institutes of Health and Suburban Hospital, which with NNMC comprise the Bethesda Hospitals Emergency Preparedness Partnership and will figure prominently in any area disaster or homeland security crisis.

The timeline in the *Tab 1 State of Maryland Action Plan* offers little specifics for completing the County's BRAC-related priorities – all transportation projects – that were submitted to the BRAC Subcabinet's Local Government Subcommittee on Transportation and were described in great detail when I hosted the Subcabinet at its public session in Rockville on October 18, 2007. There is no mention of any long-term project requests and even short-term requests are limited to studies in the Draft Plan, with no concrete projects outlined and no commitment to complete any project by 2011.

While our County is appreciative of any State project that is underway in our County, projects listed in *Tab 2 FY08 BRAC Budget* as being related to the NNMC BRAC action have little or no relationship to that BRAC action. FY08 projects related to BRAC actions elsewhere in Maryland reflect planning priorities that have been in place for years. But we in Montgomery County never anticipated expansion of the NNMC campus that would bring in an additional 2,500 employees and double its patient load, so we did not have plans in place to accommodate this issue. I must relay to you that residents of the most impacted neighborhoods in Bethesda have told me they find it unacceptable to include these mostly irrelevant projects without offering specific plans to address their impending traffic nightmare.

We must not lose sight of what this particular BRAC action is about. This is about making the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) the world-class hospital for our nation's greatest heroes. Deficiencies at Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) in the treatment and long-term rehabilitative care of soldiers returning with catastrophic injuries from the fields of battle in Iraq and Afghanistan are well documented. The nature of these ongoing conflicts means that soldiers with severe wounds, as well as retired military personnel, will be seeking treatment and care for years to come at the newly-designated WRNMMC in Bethesda. If the State of Maryland cannot provide adequate infrastructure to allow for safe and effective access to and egress from the campus, and the movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the surrounding area, it will have a devastating effect on the region's growth, prosperity, emergency preparedness and livability.

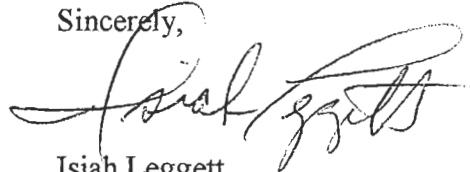
This is not just a matter of local or regional concern; this is a matter in the overriding national interest and we cannot afford to fail in our obligation to provide access to the campus for those receiving world-class military medical care. Just because this BRAC action has a smaller economic development impact than other BRAC actions in our State, the impact of this particular BRAC has a much broader national context. The State of Maryland must do its part to make sure that this BRAC does not fail because a wounded warrior or a surgeon cannot get to the hospital because their ambulance is mired in gridlock.

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The State of Maryland must play an important role in the BRAC action that will establish the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, along with its partners in Federal and County government and the neighbors of NNMC who all have a stake in the success of this newly expanded facility. The national spotlight will be focused on this unique, high profile and mission-critical project where accessibility to the campus will dictate the State of Maryland's failure or success. It is critical that the next version of the State's BRAC Action Plan scheduled for release in mid-December is a document of which we can all be proud.

Thank you for your attention in this most important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Isiah Leggett", written in a cursive style.

Isiah Leggett  
County Executive